

C99-30



FACULTY OF MUSIC

presents

Faculty Artist Series

Mayumi Seiler, violin

Aleksandar Madzar, piano

Friday, March 26, 1999

8:00 p.m.

Walter Hall

98
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
99

programme

Sonata in G Major, K. 379

Wolfgang A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Adagio - Allegro

Theme and Variations

Sonata No. 2 in D Minor, Opus 121

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Ziemlich langsam - Lebhaft

Sehr lebhaft

Leise, einfach

Bewegt

INTERMISSION

Five Melodies, Opus 35-bis

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

No. 1, Andante

No. 2, Lento, ma non troppo

No. 3, Animato, ma non troppo

No. 4, Allegretto leggero e scherzando

No. 5, Andante non troppo

Sonata No. 1 in A Major, Opus 13

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Allegro molto

Andante

Allegro vivo

Allegro quasi presto

programme notes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Sonata in G Major, K. 379

In Mozart's more than 30 sonatas for violin and piano (or "piano, with the accompaniment of a violin," as they were published), he bucked tradition by gradually making the instruments virtually equal partners. When six of the finest sonatas were published in November, 1781 (including K. 379), a German music journal took note of their quasi-egalitarian nature: "These sonatas are the only ones of this kind. Rich in new ideas and in evidences of the great musical genius of their author. Very brilliant and suited to the instrument. At the same time the accompaniment of the violin is so artfully with the keyboard part that both instruments are kept constantly on the alert; so that these sonatas require just as skillful a player on the violin as on the keyboard."

The Sonata in G Major, K. 379, dates from April, 1781. Mozart composed it to for performance during a musical soirée at the Vienna residence of his much-despised employer, Hieronymous Colloredo, Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. He stated that he had written it the night before, between 11 pm and midnight. His partner at the première was Gaetano Brunetti, first violinist in the Salzburg Court Orchestra.

Mozart was already looking ahead to leaving Salzburg for the more sophisticated and rewarding Vienna. He designed this Sonata to be more than simply background music; he crafted it to show Viennese audiences how masterfully his creative gifts could illuminate even a day-to-day medium such as this. The opening movement has two distinct sections: a florid and expansive Adagio in the home key, and a tense, driving Allegro in G Minor. The second movement is far gentler. The adventures of an artless theme in G Major include an extensive, charming run of pizzicato before it returns home in as innocent a state as it was upon departure.

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Sonata No. 2 in D Minor, Opus 121

Schumann came to the violin as a solo instrument quite late. Previously he had written for it only in larger chamber music forms such as the trio, quartet and quintet, and in orchestral scores. His interest was piqued by hearing Joseph Joachim, then just beginning a distinguished career that would bring him the dedication of Brahms' Violin Concerto and countless further accolades of comparable stature.

Schumann's two complete violin sonatas date from 1851; the Concerto and the Fantasy for violin and orchestra followed two years later. At the time he was resident in Düsseldorf as the city's general director of music. This was a period of growing instability for Schumann, beset as he was by the psychological disintegration which would lead to his admission to a mental

institution in 1854. He composed much fine music during his four years in Düsseldorf nevertheless. Further examples include the "Rhenish" Symphony (No. 3), numerous vocal pieces, and the revision of his unsuccessful Symphony in D Minor (1841) into the acclaimed Symphony No. 4.

The scale, technical and expressive demands of Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, Opus 105, are modest enough to keep it within the range of amateur performers. Sonata No. 2, in contrast, is a bigger, bolder work whose true home is the recital platform. It offers less to the virtuoso - the violin writing is rich rather than brilliant - than it does to the serious, thoughtful musician. Its creation required just eight days, October 26 to November 2. Schumann inscribed it to Ferdinand David, a renowned soloist who was also Concertmaster of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra (and the dedicatee of the magnificent Concerto in E Minor by its conductor, Felix Mendelssohn).

As is the case with Schumann's Fourth Symphony, he treats the themes of the D Minor Sonata in cyclical fashion, resulting in a satisfying sense of unity. A terse opening statement and a brief introduction in recitative-like style lead to the stormy opening movement. Its forward-pressing momentum is tempered by a sweet second subject in F Major. The ensuing Scherzo in B Minor continues the sonata's propulsive nature. It includes two contrasting Trio sections, a regular practice for Schumann. Repose appears at last in the slow movement, a set of variations on the gentle chorale melody, *Gelobet seist Du Jesu Christ*, much beloved by Bach. The Finale returns to the agitated mood of the opening movement; only gradually does it achieve emotional release by winning through triumphantly to D Major.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Five Melodies, Opus 35-bis

Prokofiev the brash young composer/pianist left the newly-formed Soviet Union in 1918, heading for America in search of greater creative freedom and fame than he had been receiving at home. His reception in New York was largely hostile, based as much on his reserved, at times sarcastic personality as the clattering, irreverent music he played at his piano recitals. Depressed, Prokofiev wrote, "I wandered through Central Park and thought of the wonderful American orchestras that cared nothing for my music, and who recoiled at the first sign of anything new." Adding to his dour mood, the première of *Love for Three Oranges*, which he had written on commission from the Chicago Opera Company, was postponed.

After an interlude in Paris, Prokofiev returned to America in 1920. Audiences on the West coast greeted him much more warmly than their Eastern counterparts. "I'm as ecstatic about California as it is about me," he wrote. "I am smiling along with the California countryside, and I've gotten those Chicagoans out of my system. Idiots!" This West-coast warmth helped the lyricism which had always been part of Prokofiev's musical personality to blossom forth. He composed the *Five Songs Without Words*, Opus 35, in California during December; additional inspiration sprang from the artistry of soprano Nina Koshetz. The originally scoring is for wordless voice and piano.

When Prokofiev prepared this transcription for violin five years later, with the assistance of soloist Paul Kochanski, he renamed the pieces *Five Melodies* and dedicated them to three violinists: Kochanski (Nos. 1, 3 and 4); Cecilia Hansen (No. 2); and Joseph Szigeti, who went on to give the first American performances of all Prokofiev's major violin works (No. 5). The *Melodies* are straightforward works, their overall mellifluousness only occasionally touched by deeper emotions or humour.

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Sonata No. 1 in A Major, Opus 13

This Sonata, Fauré's very first piece of chamber music, is something of an exception in this French master's catalogue. It displays a fresh, youthful exuberance encountered only occasionally in his later works, where restraint and delicacy are paramount. One need only compare it with Sonata No. 2, composed 43 years later, to hear the difference. Sonata No. 1 dates from 1876; Fauré dedicated it to violinist Paul Viardot. The début took place in Paris on January 27, 1877. No French publisher would touch it; the German firm Breitkopf and Härtel did so only after Fauré agreed to waive his royalties.

His teacher Camille Saint-Saëns held a much more positive view of the Sonata. His reaction reflected what he and Fauré both viewed as the overwhelming, creatively stifling interest in opera which kept French Romantic composers from earning international respect. It also anticipated the Sonata's enduring popularity: "A repertoire of French instrumental music is developing which is capable of successfully competing in an area in which, for a long time, the German school has been unrivaled," Saint-Saëns wrote. "The appearance of Fauré's Sonata has revealed to us a new champion, perhaps the most formidable of all, for he combines a profound musical knowledge and a great melodic wealth with a kind of unconscious naivete which is most irresistible. One finds in this Sonata delicacy and charm, novelty of form, resourceful modulations, unusual sonorities, and the use of the most unexpected rhythms. Over all hovers an allure that envelopes the entire work and makes the most unanticipated touches of boldness seem natural to the crowd of ordinary listeners."

The opening movement bristles with passion and power. Fauré maintains the passion but exchanges wistfulness for power in the following Andante. The brilliant, scherzo-like third movement flashes by on skittish wings. The drive that characterizes the first section returns to inflame the last.

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about the artists



MAYUMI SEILER began her musical upbringing in Osaka, Japan, where she was born of Japanese/German parentage. She began playing the violin at the age of three. At the age of six, she moved with her family to Salzburg, Austria, where she continued her studies. While attending the Salzburg Mozarteum, Ms. Seiler was prominently influenced by her association with Sandor Vegh. She performed regularly with her three sisters in the Seiler String Quartet throughout Europe and Japan. She then moved to London, England, where she forged an international solo career. *Strad Magazine* said of her, "Mayumi Seiler unites the technical excellence of the Orient with the grand chamber music tradition of Germany." Ms. Seiler has appeared as soloist with Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields at the Proms in London, and has also appeared with the Royal Philharmonic, Moscow Symphony, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Camerata Academica Salzburg, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Berlin Symphony and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, among others. As a chamber musician, she has been a guest leader with several groups, including the Nash Ensemble, and has made numerous recordings as the leader of the Schubert Ensemble of London. She travels throughout Europe, the Far East, Canada and the US, where she performs frequently in the Smithsonian Chamber Music series as a member of the Smithsonian's Axelrod String Quartet. Ms. Seiler also teaches at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Ms. Seiler's critically-acclaimed recordings of the Beethoven, Haydn and Mendelssohn Violin Concerti have been released on a double-CD set this year by *Virgin Classics*. Her Sonata recordings, with pianist Aleksandar Madzar, are available on *JVC Victor*. *BBC Music Magazine* wrote, "she brings to these pieces an exceptional blend of precision with tonal generosity, finesse with enthusiasm". She also performs regularly for CBC and BBC Radio, as well as other European stations and Japanese radio and television. Ms. Seiler recently returned from a tour of Japan and Vienna, where she performed Mozart's concerto KV218 in Vienna's prestigious Musikverein. Next season she will be presenting a new series of Chamber Music at the Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto, in which International musicians will join her in various programmes. The first will feature the Axelrod Quartet on October 22, followed by a trio concert with Jamie Somerville and Ikuyo Nakamichi on December 18, and the Seiler String Quartet on April 14. On May 12, 2000, Mr. Madzar will return to Toronto in this series to play the Mendelssohn Double Concerto with Ms. Seiler and chamber Orchestra. With support of a private benefactor, Mayumi Seiler plays a circa 1740 J.B. Guadagnini violin. She has a baby daughter Hana, who cheerfully travels with her on her concert schedule. In her spare time, Mayumi enjoys snorkelling, tennis and skiing.



In October 1997, the young Yugoslavian pianist **ALEKSANDAR MADZAR** was awarded first prize in the Umberto Micheli Piano Competition in Milan. He also received a special prize for his performance of a new work by Stockhausen, which had been commissioned for the competition. This followed his success in the 1996 Leeds Competition, in which he was awarded third prize; Gerald Larner of *The Times* described him as "the most imaginative musician among the 1996 finalists." Since the Leeds

Competition Aleksandar Madzar has performed with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, in recitals for the BBC, at the Sintra Festival in Portugal, Klavier Festival Ruhr, Schleswig Holstein Music Festival and in Milan and Venice, and in chamber concerts at the Wigmore Hall in London. Engagements for the 1998-99 season and beyond include concertos with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, National Orchestra of Belgium, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie and Orchestra della Toscana, chamber concerts in Paris and for BBC Scotland, recitals in Rome, Florence, Naples and London (Queen Elizabeth Hall) and on tour in Japan. His recording of the two Chopin piano concertos, with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony and Dmitri Kitaenko, was released in 1997 on the BMG/Classic FM label. Born in Belgrade in 1968, Aleksandar Madzar began his piano studies at the age of six with Gordana Matinovic. In 1984 he became a student of Arbo Valdna at the Belgrade Academy of Music. From 1987 to 1989 he studied with Eliso Virsaladze in Moscow, and subsequently he worked with Edouard Mirzoyan at the Strasbourg Conservatory, and in Brussels with Daniel Blumenthal. His numerous prizes include: 1985 Barenreiter Prize; International Bach-Handel-Scarlatti Competition in Varazdin, Yugoslavia (2nd prize); Yugoslav Radio "Most successful young musician" (1985 and 1986); Concours d'Execution Musicale in Geneva (1987) and Busoni International Piano Competition, Bolzano (1989). Since his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1990, conducted by Ivan Fischer, he has appeared with many leading orchestras including the Radio Symphony Orchestra Cologne (Gary Bertini), Chamber Orchestra of Europe (Libor Pesek), the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London (Sir Charles Groves), the Orchestre de l'Opera de la Monnaie (Marcello Viotti), the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Duetsche Kammerphilharmonie at the Schleswig Holstein Festival, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice, the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Bremen Philharmonic Orchestra (Marcello Viotti), and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra (Kazushi Ono). In March 1996, at very short notice, he stood in for Maria Joao Pires in performances of Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and Ivan Fischer. Aleksandar Madzar has given recitals in Paris, Hamburg, Duisburg, the Bad Kissingen Summer Festival, the Ivo Pogorelich Festival in Bad Wörishofen, the Davos Festival, the Festival of La Roque d'Anthéron, the Ruhr Piano Festival, the Salzburg Festival and a televised concert for the German President in Schloss Bellevue, Berlin.

upcoming faculty artist concert

April 9, 1999. 8:00 pm in Walter Hall. Tickets \$15/10

Antonin Kubalek, piano

Prominent concert pianist and prolific recording artist Antonin Kubalek presents for the first time in North America the monumental PAN(1910) by Vitezslav Novak and the premiere of Daniel Foley's CAROLINA RHAPSODY, Op. 33.

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